

CLAIMS

1. A process for distilling paraffinic hydrocarbons, which process comprises

feeding a Fischer-Tropsch derived paraffinic hydrocarbon feedstock comprising heavy paraffinic hydrocarbons and, optionally, light and/or medium paraffinic hydrocarbons, into a distillation column;

operating the distillation column to produce usable wax products; and

withdrawing from the distillation column an overhead stream, a bottom stream comprising usable wax products, and at least one side stream comprising usable wax products.

2. A process according to Claim 1, wherein the Fischer-Tropsch derived paraffinic hydrocarbon feedstock comprises, in addition to the heavy paraffinic hydrocarbons and which comprise hydrocarbon molecules with carbon numbers or carbon atoms in the range C_{15} and greater, also medium paraffinic hydrocarbons comprising hydrocarbon molecules with carbon numbers in the range C_{10} to C_{80} , and light paraffinic hydrocarbons comprising hydrocarbon molecules with carbon numbers in the range C_{35} and less.

3. A process according to Claim 2, wherein the operation of the distillation column is such that it produces, as the usable wax products, hard wax comprising hydrocarbon molecules with carbon numbers in the range C_{30} and greater, and medium wax comprising hydrocarbon molecules with carbon numbers in the range C_{20} to C_{38} , with the distillation column also producing paraffins comprising hydrocarbon molecules with carbon numbers in the range C_{23} and less.

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4. A process according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3 inclusive~~, wherein the distillation column is operated under vacuum.

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5. A process according to Claim 4, wherein the distillation column has a sump, with the distillation column being operated such that the pressure in the column is from 1 to 12 mbar(a), and the temperature in the column sump is from 190°C to 350°C, and with the bottom stream being withdrawn from the sump.

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6. A process according to Claim 5, which includes cooling the bottom stream, and recycling up to 10% by volume of the bottom stream to the sump, as a sump quench.

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7. A process according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 6 inclusive~~, which includes feeding stripping steam into the distillation column, to adjust the relative volatility of components in the feedstock.

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8. A process according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 7 inclusive~~, wherein the distillation column contains structured packing as a distillation medium, with the structured packing having a surface area (in m²) to volume (in m³) ratio of 125:1 to 750:1.

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9. A process according to Claim 8, wherein a plurality of the side streams are provided, with the distillation column including a draw point or zone for each of the side streams as well as for the overhead and bottom streams, and with a plurality of distillation stages being provided in the distillation column, with each stage being located between the draw points or zones for two of the streams, and with each stage comprising the structured packing.

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10. A process according to Claim 79, wherein the structured packings of the different stages have the same surface area to volume ratios.

11. A process according to Claim 9, wherein the structured packings of at least some of the stages have different surface area to volume ratios.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099
1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	